begin to . . walk and talk," Luella suggested. "I . . therefore . . believe that what . . you have just said is . . true."

"And you really want to undertake the task of bringing the child up yourself," the Duke asked, "despite the fact that he is not of your nationality?"

"It will . . not be.easy," Luella answered, "but it is something I am . . ready to do . . rather than let him go back to . . Signor Vecchio . . now that I know how . . wicked he is!"

"And you expect me to let that happen?" the Duke asked.

Luella looked at him. "You mean . . you will not . . allow the Ambassador to . . send him back?"

"I would not send any living creature to a man I so utterly despise, and who I think is the Devil himself!" the Duke said sharply.

Luella gave a cry of relief. "I am so glad . . so very glad! It would be a crime . . a terrible crime!"

"And yet it was a crime you thought I might commit!" the Duke persisted.

"I hoped and . . prayed you would not," Luella said simply.

To her surprise the Duke smiled. "Between us," he said, "I am sure we can contrive that the young Italian one way or another, has the chance of a decent life."

"Oh, thank you . . thank you! You are wonderful to be so understanding!" Luella cried. "I was . . so afraid you would . . refuse to . . help me."

"I have not said that I will allow you to look after him," the Duke pointed out. "You are very young,

Luella, and very beautiful. Just as I have to think of Enrico's future, I have to think of yours."

"No!" Luella said fiercely. "I have to look after myself. I am sure if Papa's book is published I shall have enough money to do that."

"I will send for your father's publishers tomorrow," the Duke promised. "It is too late now, and anyway, we are all tired after such a long journey."

"Now that you have been so kind," Luella answered, "I feel as if I had wings on my feet and could fly into the sky, or dance in the garden under the trees!"

The Duke laughed. "That is something I would very much like to see you do. In fact, if it were not that my Aunt Anne would violently disapprove, I would take you out to supper this evening at Romano's or somewhere where we could dance."

"That would be . . marvellous!" Luella exclaimed.

The Duke shook his head. "After the lecture she gave me this morning about allowing you to stay in the Castle unchaperoned, I can assure you that my other relations, like my Aunt, would be horrified at the idea of my dancing alone with a lady, unchaperoned in any restaurant!"

"Then I am sure they would be deeply shocked at some of the places I have been to with my father and mother," Luella said. "We have been to palaces in India, and in Egypt, where the women danced in an exotic manner which Papa later wrote about, but which was considered very unsuitable for me."

"Then why did they take you?" the Duke enquired.

"Because they did not want to leave me alone at an hotel or in a tent, or wherever they were staying at the